However, the above statement is not supported by the disclosure of Verma. As discussed in the Amendment filed on September 24, 2010, there is no teaching or suggestion in Verma of image data processing means that have "different security levels," as claimed.

For example, it is described in paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma that **users** may have access rights that enable them to have access to DMM objects, **not that the peripherals themselves have "different security levels," as claimed** (emphasis added).

One of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the assignment of different access rights to users does not imply that the peripherals would have their own security levels.

In fact, as described in paragraphs 0152 and 0169 of Verma, access rights to DMM objects are managed independently of the peripherals themselves.

Additionally, paragraph 0089 of Verma describes that a thin client 224 communicates with a remote DMM 232 of a second appliance 234; and paragraph 0277 of Verma describes how a DDM 206 monitors a queue 7906, and can pass data to an appropriate destination. However, these sections of Verma do not teach or suggest that the peripherals themselves have "different security levels," as claimed.

Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Verma of checking security levels of a "second" image data processing means in order to request that the second image data processing means perform distributed processing.

On page 7, first paragraph of the Office Action of 11/22/2010, it was admitted that the Verma reference does not teach or suggest "verifying security levels" of a second image data processing means, but column 4, lines 30-38 of Lunt was cited allegedly to remedy this deficiency.

As shown in FIG. 1 of Lunt, a network 100 includes a server 110 that controls a plurality of computers 121-123 and "trusted" printers 131-135, where a "trusted" printer is available only to authorized users of the network (see column 2, lines 47-52 of Lunt).

Referring to column 4, lines 23-42 of Lunt, a policy 113 determines security requirements for a document 140 to be printed, and the document 140 is then routed to one of the trusted printers 131-135 that can apply appropriate protections.

However, even if Lunt is somehow combined with Verma, the proposed combination still does not teach or suggest that first and second image data processing means have different security levels, and where an image data processing requesting means verifies a security level of the second image data processing means so that distributed processing can be performed by the second image data processing means, as claimed.

The proposed combination of Verma in view of Lunt does not teach or suggest verifying a security level of a second image data processing means, and then requesting the second image data processing means to perform "distributed processing of image data in addition to the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data," as claimed.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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